Deaths due to air-pollution

494. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether as per World Bank study, 40,000 people die of air-pollution every year in Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Kanpur and Nagpur, besides Delhi, heads the list of such deaths;

(b) whether air-pollution has a significant impact on heart disease and results in raise of coronary events within 24 to 48 hours after the pollution level increases in Delhi; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by Government to check air-pollution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) The World Bank Study estimate of premature deaths is based on a model developed for other countries and applied to India. Therefore, it is very difficult to accept that these deaths are due only to pollution and not to any other factors.

(b) Air pollution, specially Suspended Particulate Matters (SPM) is known to have impacts on health, mainly on the respiratory system which can in turn affect the heart. Under normal conditions only prologned exposure results in aggravation of the disease.

(c) The Government has already implemented certain control measures such as introduction of:—

(i) Unleaded petrol

(ii) Bharat I and II emission standards

(iii) Low sulphur diesel

(iv) CNG for commercial vehicles

(v) Pollution Under Control (PUC) certificate

Central Pollution Control Board, Delhi is the authority for checking the air pollution levels in various cities and for studying the effect of various control measures through the concerned State Pollution Control Boards.